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PLANNING THE YEAR'S FOOD SUPPLY.

A radio talk by Miss Miriam Birdseye, Extension Nutritionist, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered in the Home Demonstration Radio Hour, January 2, 1935, and broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations.

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Planning the food supply for the farm family is not a new idea of course. Beginning with the first settlers at Jamestown and the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth Rock, American farm families have struggled to produce in the growing season food for their needs, and to lay it by against the lean months of non-production. Our first Thanksgiving Day was proclaimed because the planting plans of the Pilgrim Fathers and their hunting expeditions had resulted in such an abundant and varied store of food that the settlers could face the coming winter with a stout heart.

The idea that is new is planning the year's food supply on the basis of the family's nutritional needs. Only during the last few years have we learned how much of each of the six essential food groups are needed by people of different ages to keep their bodies in good running order, to provide for steady, rapid growth, and to build up strong resistance against disease. These six food groups, of course, are milk; lean meats, eggs and fish; butter and other fats; vegetables and fruits; grain products; sugar and other sweets. Had those who outfitted the Pilgrim Fathers known how much of each of these food groups the party required for their first twelve months and had they been able to provide it, the survivors of that first winter would not have had to sow grain over the graves of the rest to prevent the Indians from seeing how their man power had dwindled. The same knowledge would have saved the lives of countless pioneers in the generations that followed.

Some years ago nutrition specialists of the various State Extension Services developed the idea of a daily food selection score or standard to guide the home maker in securing enough of certain important food groups in her daily meals. Most of you know and follow this simple plan, which calls for a certain number of servings of milk, vegetables, fruits, efficient protein foods, whole grain products and water each day. Thousands of farm women who used this device discovered to their surprise that the farm food supply which they had considered ample did not enable them to live up to the suggested standard in certain respects, especially in the matter of vegetables and fruits. This led them, with the help of extension workers, to revise their garden plans, carry out canning and storage budgets, and figure out the size of the poultry flock and the number of dairy and meat animals needed to keep their particular families in prime nutritional condition.

In 1932, State nutrition specialists began, with the help of food production and farm management specialists, to combine these separate estimates into a plan for a whole year's balanced food supply and now practically every state extension service has published suggestive farm food supply plans based on its own growing conditions and types of farming, and on the food habits of its people.

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Most of the food budgets thus worked out come very close to, or are based on, one or the other of the two most generous diets recently published by Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling of the Bureau of Home Economics, in Miscellaneous Publication 183 of the United States Department of Agriculture, "Food Budgets for Nutrition and Production Programs." These two diets are known as the adequate diet at moderate cost and the liberal diet respectively. Some states in the South have worked out special yearly food budgets for share croppers who move frequently. These budgets provide for generous year round gardens and a relatively smaller, though sufficient, supply of animal foods.

Now, how worthwhile is it, to plan out the family food supply for a year in advance and to raise a very large share of it? The money value of the adequate food supply at moderate cost for a year for an active farm family consisting of father, mother, a boy in his teens and a child of eight, runs around \$12.80 a week or \$670 a year, figured at last September's retail prices. I feel that it is fair to value this farm food supply at retail prices, because the family has to pay the retail price for such of its foods as it does not produce. Let's see what such an enterprise amounts to for the long pull that investment experts like to talk about.

Suppose that, over a period of 22 years, a farmer and his wife raise a boy and a girl and send them out from the home farm on their eighteenth birthdays to seek their fortunes. The food supply for such a family for 22 years would be worth in round numbers about \$12,000. Here are the amazing food totals required by the adequate diet at moderate cost (figures are rounded for convenience);

- 6,000 gallons of milk
- 4 tons of meat and poultry
- 1,300 dozens of eggs
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons of butter and other fats
- 8 tons of potatoes
- 2 tons of dried beans or peas
- 4 tons of leafy or green vegetables
- $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons of tomatoes
- 1 ton of dried fruits
- $5\frac{1}{2}$ tons of other fruits and vegetables
- 7 tons of flour and cereals
- $2\frac{3}{4}$ tons of sugar, molasses and other sweets

And even this doesn't provide for the hired man, week-end guests, the children's parties, gifts, losses in storage and gross wastes.

As a housewife, just think of preparing all that food! Think of planning meals to use it! And, as a home manager, think of paying someone else to raise it for you!

In these days of comparatively low farm prices and uncertain farm income, of financial obligations and deferred wants, it is doubly wise to make a plan for a well-balanced, thoroughly adequate food supply, and to produce as much of this supply as conditions permit. The thought, time and effort expended will yield

generous returns in cash savings, abounding health, variety and enjoyment at table, family cooperation, and the same sort of satisfaction in good headwork that one gets out of putting together a jig-saw puzzle or playing a hand of bridge to the best advantage.

You can get suggestions for working out a yearly food supply plan from the Extension Service of your own State College of Agriculture or from your county extension agents. These agents will help you fit the general pattern to your own particular family and type of farming. If you want to see the basic food budgets suggested by the Department of Agriculture, send 5 cents in coin to the Government Printing Office in Washington for a copy of U. S. D. A. Miscellaneous Publication 183, "Food Budgets for Nutrition and Production Programs," or for the fuller and more technical U. S. D. A. Circular No. 296, "Diets at Four Levels of Nutritive Content and Cost." Write to the Division of Cooperative Extension for the mimeographed charts called "It's a \$12,000 Enterprise" and "Plan to Produce the Most of this Food Supply on the Farm."

U. S. D. A.
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